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LETTER

TO THE

Reverend Mr. *DOWNES*,

Rector of St. *Michael, Wood - Street* :

Occasioned by his

L A T E T R A C T,

INTITLED

Methodism examined and exposed.

By JOHN WESLEY, M.A.



L O N D O N :

Printed, and sold at the Foundery, Upper Moor-fields ;
by *W. Flexney* under Gray's-Inn-Gate ; *F. Cabe*,
Avemary-lane ; and *G. Keith*, Grace-church-street ;
at the New-room, Bristol ; by *W. Watkinson*, Linen-
draper, Leeds ; and at the *Arabian-house*, New-
castle upon Tyne. 1759.

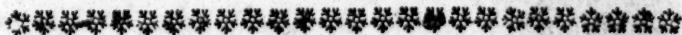
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A
L E T T E R
T O T H E

Rev. Mr. D O W N E S, &c.



REV. SIR,

I.  N the Tract which you have just published concerning the People called *Methodists*, you very properly say, " Our first Care should be, candidly and fairly to examine their Doctrines. For, as to censure them *unexamined* would be unjust, so to do the the same without a *fair and impartial Examination* would be ungenerous." And again, " We should, in the first place, carefully and candidly examine their Doctrines." * This is undoubtedly true. But have you done it? Have you ever examined their Doctrines yet? Have you examined them *fairly*? Fairly and *candidly*? *Candidly and care-*

* Page 68.

fully

fully ? Have you read over so much as the *Sermons* they have published ? Or the *Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion* ? I hope you have not : for I would fain make some little Excuse for your uttering so many senseless, shameless Falshoods. I hope you know nothing about the *Methodists*, no more than I do about the *Cham* of *Tartary* : That you are ignorant of the whole Affair, and are so bold, only because you are blind. Bold enough ! Throughout your whole Tract, you speak *satis pro imperio* : As authoritatively, as if you was not an Archbishop only, but Apostolic Vicar also : As if you had the full *Papal Power* in your hands, and *Fire and Faggot* at your Beck ! And blind enough : So that you blunder on, through thick and thin, bespattering all that come in your way : According to the old, laudable Maxim, “ Throw Dirt enough, and some will stick.”

2. I hope, I say, that this is the Case, and that you do not knowingly assert so many palpable Falshoods. You say, “ If I am mistaken, I shall always be ready and desirous to retract my Error.” || A little Candour and Care might have prevented those Mistakes ; This is the first Thing one would have desired. The next is, that they may be removed ; that you may see where in you have been mistaken, and be more wary for the time to come.

3. You undertake to give an account, First, Of the Rise and Principles, then of the Practices of the *Methodists*.

On the former head you say, " Our Church has long been infested with these *grievous Wolves*, who tho' no more than two when they entered in, and they so young, they might rather be called *Wolfings*," (That is lively and pretty!) " have yet spread their ravenous kind, through every Part of this Kingdom. Where what havock they have made, how many of the Sheep they have torn----I need not say. § About twenty-five years ago, these two bold, though beardless Divines," (Pity, Sir, that you had not taught me twenty-five years ago *sapientem pascere barbam*, and thereby to avoid some Part of your Displeasure) being lifted up with Spiritual Pride were, presumptuous enough to become Founders of the Sect called *Methodists*." † " A Couple ‡ of young, raw, aspiring Twigs of the Ministry, dream'd of a Special and Supernatural Call to this." No, Sir, it was *you* dream'd of this, not *we*. We dream'd of nothing twenty-five Years ago, but instructing our Pupils in Religion and Learning, and a few Prisoners, in the Common Principles of Christianity. You go on. " They were ambitious of being accounted Missionaries, immediately delegated by Heaven to correct the Errors of Bishops and Archbishops, and reform their Abuses, to instruct the Clergy in the true Nature of Christianity, and to caution the Laity, not to venture their Souls in any such unhallowed hands, as refused to be initiated in all the Mysteries of * *Methodism*." Well *asserted* indeed! But where is the *Proof* of any One of these Propositions? I

§ Page 4, 5. †*Page 6. ‡ Page 25.

* Page 20, 21.

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must

must insist upon this ; clear, cogent Proof. Else they must be set down for so many glaring Fals-hoods.

4. “ The Church of *Rome* (to which on so many accounts they were much obliged, and as gratefully returned the Obligation) taught them to set up for *infallible* Interpreters * of Scripture.” Pray on what Accounts are we “ obliged to the Church of *Rome* ?” And how have we “ returned the Obligation ? ” I beg you would please, 1. To explain this : and 2. To prove, that we ever yet (who ever taught us) “ set up for *infallible* Interpreters of Scripture.” So far from it, that we have over and over declared, in Print as well as in public Preaching, “ We are no more to expect any *living Man* to be *infallible* than to be Omniscient.”||

5. “ As to other *Extraordinary Gifts, Influences* and *Operations* of the Holy Ghost, no Man who has but once dipped into their Journals and other *ostentatious Trash* of the same Kind, can doubt their looking upon themselves, as not coming one whit behind the greatest of the Apostles.” †

I acquit you, Sir, of ever having “ once dipped into that ostentatious Trash.” I do not accuse you of having read so much as the Titles of my Journals. I say, *my Journals* ; for (as little as you seem to know it) my Brother has published none. I therefore look upon this as simple Ignorance. You talk thus, because you know no better. You do not know, that in these very

* Page 54. || Sermons, Vol. III. p. 207.

† Fol. 21.

Journals I utterly disclaim the “ *Extraordinary Gifts* of the Spirit,” and all other “ *Influences and Operations* of the Holy Ghost,” than those that are common to all real Christians.

And yet I will not say, this Ignorance is Blameless. For ought you not to have known better? Ought you not to have taken the Pains of procuring better Information, when it might so easily have been had? Ought you to have publicly advanced so heavy Charges as these, without knowing whether they were true or no?

6. You proceed to give as punctual an Account of us, *tanquam intus & in cute nosse*. “ They outstript, if possible, even *Montanus* for external Sanctity and Severity of Discipline*. They condemned all Regard for temporal Concerns.---- they encouraged their Devotees to take no Thought for any one Thing upon Earth: The Consequence of which was, a *total Neglect* of their Affairs, and *Impoverishment* of their Families.” † Blunder all over! We had no Room for any Discipline, severe or not, five and twenty Years ago: Unless College Discipline, my Brother then residing at *Christ-Church*, and I at *Lincoln-College*. And as to our “ Sanctity” (were it more or less) How do you know it was only *External*? Was you intimately acquainted with us? I do not remember, where I had the Honour of conversing with you. Or could you (as the Legend says of *St. Pachomius*) “ smell an Heretic ten miles” off? And how came you to dream again, That we “ condemned all Regard for *Temporal* Concerns,

and encouraged Men to take no Thought for any one Thing upon *Earth?*" Vain Dream ! We on the contrary severely condemn all who neglect their *temporal* Concerns, and who do not take Care of every Thing on earth wherewith God hath intrusted them. The Consequence of this is, that the *Methodists*, so called, do not " neglect their Affairs and impoverish their Families ; " but by Diligence in Business *provide Things honest in the Sight of all Men*. Inasmuch that Multitudes of them, who in Time past, had scarce Food to eat, or Raiment to put on, have now *all Things* needful for *Life and Godliness*, and that for their Families, as well as themselves.

7. Hitherto you have been giving an Account of two *Wolflings* only: But now they are grown into perfect *Wolves*. Let us see what a Picture you draw of them in this State, both as to their Principles and Practice.

You begin with a home Stroke, " In the *Montanist* * you may behold the *bold* Lineaments and *bloated* Countenance of the *Methodist*." I wish you do not squint at the *honest* Countenance of Mr. Venn, who is indeed as far from Fear, as he is from Guile. But if it is somewhat *bloated*, that is not his Fault: Sicknes may have the same Effect on yours or mine.

But to come closer to the Point. " They have † darkened Religion with many ridiculous Fancies, tending to confound the Head, and to corrupt the Heart." A thorough Knowledge of them would work in every rightly-disposed

* Page 17.

† Page 13.

Mind an Abhorrence of those Doctrines, which directly tend to distract the Head, and to debauch the Heart, by turning Faith into Frensy, and the Grace of God into Wantonness. *” “ These Doctrines are Unreasonable and Ridiculous, clashing with our Natural Ideas of the Divine Perfections, with the End of Religion, with the Honour of God, and Man’s both present and future Happiness. Therefore we pronounce them *filthy Dreamers*, turning Faith into Fancy, the Gospel into Farce, thus adding Blasphemy to Enthusiasm.” ||

Take Breath, Sir, There is a long Paragraph behind. “ The Abettors § of these wild and whimsical Notions, are 1. close Friends to the *Church of Rome*, agreeing with her in almost every Thing, but the Doctrine of Merit: 2. They are no less kind to *Infidelity*, by making the Christian Religion a mere Creature of the Imagination: 3. They cut up *Christianity* by the Roots, frustrating the very End for which Christ died, which was that by Holiness we might be *made meet for the Inheritance of the Saints*: 4. They are Enemies not only to Christianity, but to *every Religion whatsoever*, by labouring to subvert or overturn the whole System of Morality: 5. Consequently they must be *Enemies of Society*, dissolving the Bands by which it is united and knit together.” In a Word, “ All antient Heresies have in a Manner *concentered* in the *Methodists*: Particularly those of the *Simonians*, *Gnostics*, *Antinomians*: (As widely distant from each other, as *Predeterminarians* from *Calvinists* !) *Valentinians*, *Donatists*

* Page 27. || P. 66, 68. & P. 101, 102.

and *Montanists*." While your Hand was in, you might as well have added, *Carpocratians*, *Euty-chians*, *Nestorians*, *Sabellians*. If you say, "I never heard of them:" no matter for that: You may find them as well as the rest in Bp. *Pearson's Index*.

Well, all this is mere Flourish; raising a Dust, to blind the Eyes of the Spectators. Generals, you know, prove nothing. So leaving this as it is, let us come to Particulars.

But, first, give me leave to transcribe a few Words from a Tract published some Years ago. "Your * Lordship premises, *It is not at all needful to charge the particular Tenets upon the particular Persons among them.*" Indeed it is needful in the highest Degree. Just as needful as it is, not to put a Stumbling in the Way of our Brethren: Not to lay them under an almost insuperable Temptation, of condemning the Innocent with the Guilty."

And it is now far more needful than it was then; as that Title of Reproach, *Methodist*, is now affixt to many People, who are not under my Care, nor ever had any Connexion with me. And what have I to do with these? If you give me a Nick-name, and then give it to others whom I know not, Does this make *me* accountable for *them*? Either for their Principles or Practice? In no wise. I am to answer for myself, and for those that are in Connexion with me. This is all that a Man of common Sense can undertake, or a Man of common Humanity require.

Let us begin then upon even Ground: And if you can prove upon me, *John Wesley*, any one of

* Letter to the Bp. of London, p. 4. 5.

the Charges which you have advanced, call me not only a *Wolf*, but an *Otter*, if you please.

8. Your first Particular Charge (which indeed runs through your Book, and is repeated in twenty different Places) is, that we make the Way to Heaven *too broad*, teaching, Men may be saved by Faith, without Works. Some of your Words are, “ They * *set out* with forming a *fair and tempting* Model of Religion, so *flattering* the Follies of degenerate Man, that it could not fail to gain the Hearts of Multitudes, especially of the Loose and Vicious, the Lazy and Indolent.” “ They want to get to Heaven the *shortest Way*, and with the *least Trouble* : New a Reliance on Christ and a disclaiming of Good Works, are *Terms as easy* as the meekest Libertine can ask. They persuade their People that they may be saved by the Righteousness of Christ, without any Holiness of their own : Nay, That || Good Works are not only unnecessary, but also dangerous : That we † may be saved by Faith, without any other Requisite,” such as “ Gospel-Obedience, and holy Life.” Lastly, “ The § *Valentinians* pretended, that if Good Works were necessary to Salvation, it was only to *animal* Men, that is, to all who were not of their Clan : And that although Sin might damn *others*, it could not hurt *them*. In Consequence of which they lived in all Lust and Impurity, and wallowed in the most unheard-of Bestialities. The *Methodists* distinguish much after the same Manner.”

Sir, you are not awake yet. You are dreaming still, and fighting with shadows of your own

* Page 52, † P. 31. || P. 38. § P. 14.

, raising

raising." The " Model of Religion with which the *Methodists set out*," is perfectly well known, if not to you, yet to many thousands in *England*, who are no *Methodists*. I laid it before the University of *Oxford*, at *St. Mary's*, on *January 1, 1733*. You may read it when you are at Leisure, for it is in Print, intitled, " The Circumcision of the Heart." And whoever reads only that one Discourse, with any tolerable Share of Attention, will easily judge, whether *that Model of Religion* " flatters the Follies of degenerate Man," or is likely to " gain the Hearts of Multitudes, especially of the Loose and Vicious, the Lazy and Indolent." Will a Man choose this, as " the *shortest Way to Heaven*, and with the *least Trouble* ? Are these " as *easy Terms*, as any Libertine or Infidel can desire ? " The Truth is, we have been these thirty Years continually reproached for just the contrary to what you dream of : with making the Way to Heaven *too strait* ; with being ourselves *righteous over-much*, and teaching others, They could not be saved without *so many Works* as it was impossible for them to perform. And to this Day, instead of teaching Men, that they may be saved by a Faith which is without Good Works, without " Gospel-Obedience and Holiness of Life," we teach exactly the Reverse, continually insisting on all *outward* as well as all *inward Holiness*. For the notorious Truth of this, we appeal to the whole Tenor of our Sermons, printed and unprinted : In particular to those upon our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, wherein every Branch of Gospel-Obedience is both asserted and proved to be indispensably necessary to eternal Salvation.

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Therefore as to the rest of the “ *Antinomian Tract* ” which you have so carefully gather’d up, as,
 * “ That the Regenerate are as pure as Christ himself, that it would be criminal for them to pray for Pardon: that the greatest Crimes are no Crimes in the Saints,” &c. &c. I have no Concern therewith at all, no more than with any that teach it. Indeed I have confuted it over and over, in Tracts published many Years ago.

9. A Second Charge which you advance, is, that “ we suppose every Man’s final Doom to depend on GOD’s Sovereign Will and Pleasure : ” (I presume, you mean, on his Absolute, Unconditional Decree : That we “ consider Man as a mere Machine : ” That we suppose Believers “ cannot fall from Grace.” || Nay, I suppose none of these Things. Let those who do, answer for themselves. I suppose just the contrary, in “ Predestination calmly considered,” a Tract published ten Years ago.

10. A Third Charge is, “ They represent Faith as a Supernatural Principle, altogether precluding the Judgment and Understanding, and discern’d by some Internal Signs; not as a firm Persuasion, founded on the Evidence of Reason, and discernible only by a Conformity of Life and Manners to such a Persuasion.” †

We do not represent Faith “ as altogether precluding, or at all precluding the Judgment and Understanding : ” Rather as inlightening and strengthening the Understanding, as clearing and improving the Judgment. But we do represent it as *the Gift of God*, yea, and a “ superna-

* Page 17.

|| Page 31.

† Page 11.

‡ Page 33.

tural Gift," yet it does not preclude "the Evidence of Reason; "tho' neither is this it's whole Foundation. "A Conformity of Life and Manners" to that Persuasion, *Christ loved me and gave himself for me*, is doubtless *One* Mark by which it is discern'd; but not the *only* one. It is likewise discern'd by *Internal Signs*, both by the Witness of the Spirit, and the Fruit of the Spirit, namely *Love, Peace, Joy, Meekness, Gentleness*: by all *the Mind which was in Christ Jesus*.

II. You assert, Fourthly, "They speak of Grace, that it is as perceptible to the Heart, as Sensible Objects are to the Senses: Whereas the Scriptures speak of Grace, that it is convey'd imperceptibly; and that the only Way to be satisfied whether we have it or no, is to appeal, not to our inward Feelings, but our outward Actions."§

We do speak of Grace (meaning thereby that Power of GOD which worketh in us both to will and to do of his good Pleasure) that it is "as perceptible to the Heart" (while it comforts, refreshes, purifies, and shed's the Love of GOD abroad therein) "as sensible Objects are to the Senses." And yet we do not doubt, but it may frequently be "conveyed to us imperceptibly." But we know no Scripture which speaks of it as *always* convey'd, and *always* working in an imperceptible Manner. We likewise allow, that Outward Actions are *One Way* of satisfying us, that we have Grace in our Hearts. But we cannot possibly allow, that "the only Way to be satisfied of this, is to appeal to our *Outward Actions* and not our *inward Feelings*." On the contrary, we believe that Love, Joy, Peace, are *inwardly felt*, or they have no Being: And that

Men are satisfied they have Grace, first by feeling these, and afterward by their Outward Actions.

12. You assert, fifthly, “ They talk of Regeneration in every Christian, as if it was as sudden and miraculous a Conversion, as that of St. *Paul* and the first Converts to Christianity, and as if the Signs of it were frightful Tremors of Body, and convulsive Agonies of Mind: Not as a Work graciously begun and gradually carried on by the blessed Spirit, in Conjunction with our rational Powers and Faculties; the Signs of which are, sincere and universal * Obedience.”

This is Part true, Part false. We do believe Regeneration, or in plain *English*, the New Birth, to be as miraculous or supernatural a Work now as it was seventeen hundred Years ago. We likewise believe, that the Spiritual Life, which commences when we are born again, must in the Nature of the Thing, have a *First Moment* as well as the Natural. But we say again and again, We are concerned for the *Substance* of the Work, not the *Circumstance*. Let it be wrought at all, and we will not contend, whether it be wrought Gradually or Instantaneously. “ But what are the Signs that it is wrought?” We never said or thought, that they were either “ frightful Tremors of Body,” or “ convulsive Agonies of Mind :” I presume you mean, Agonies of Mind attended with Bodily Convulsions. Although we know many Persons who *before* this Change was wrought, felt much Fear and Sorrow of Mind: Which in some of these had such an effect on the Body, as to make all their Bones to shake. Neither did we ever deny, that it is a “ Work graciously begun by the Holy

Spirit, enlightning our Understanding (which I suppose you call " our Rational Powers and Faculties,") as well as influencing our Affections. And it is certain, He " gradually carries on this Work," by continuing to influence all the Powers of the Soul : And that the *Outward Sign* of this Inward Work, is " sincere and universal Obedience."

13. A Sixth Charge is " They treat Christianity as a wild, enthusiastic Scheme, which will bear no *Examination*. * " Where or when ? In what Sermon ? In what Tract, Practical or Polemical ? I wholly deny the Charge. I have myself closely and carefully *examined* every Part of it, every Verse of the New Testament, in the Original, as well as in our own and other Translations.

14. Nearly allied to this is the threadbare Charge of *Enthusiasm*, with which you frequently and largely compliment us. But as this also is *asserted* only, and not *proved*, it falls to the Ground of itself. Mean time your asserting it, is a plain Proof, that you know nothing of the Men you talk of. Because you know them not, you so boldly say, " One Advantage we have over them, and that is *Reason*." Nay, that is the very Question. I appeal to all Mankind, Whether you have it, or no ? However, you are sure, we have it not, and are never likely to have. For " Reason, you say, cannot do much with an Enthusiast, whose first Principle is, to have nothing to do with Reason, but resolve all his religious Opinions and Notions into immediate Inspiration." Then, by your own Account I am no Enthusiast ; for I resolve none of my

Notions into immediate Inspiration. I have something to do with Reason; perhaps as much as many of those who *make no Account of my Labours*. And I am ready to give up every Opinion, which I cannot by calm, clear Reason defend. Whenever therefore you “ will try what you can do by *Argument*,” which you have not done yet, I wait your Leisure, and will follow you Step by Step, which Way soever you lead.

15. “ But is not this a plain Proof of the Enthusiasm of the *Methodists*, That they despise human Learning, and make a loud and terrible Outcry against it?” Pray, Sir, when and where was this done? Be so good as to point out the Time and Place; for I am quite a Stranger to it. I believe indeed, and so do you, that many Men make an ill Use of their Learning. But so they do of their Bibles: Therefore this is no Reason for despising or crying out against it. I would use it just as far as it will go; How far I apprehend it may be of Use, how far I judge it to be expedient at least, if not necessary for a Clergyman, You might have seen, in the *Earnest Address to the Clergy*. But in the mean time I bless God, that there is a more excellent Gift, than either the Knowledge of Languages or Philosophy. For Tongues and Knowledge and Learning will *vanish away*; but *Love never faileth*.

16. I think this is all you have said which is any Way material concerning the *Doctrines* of the *Methodists*. The Charges you bring concerning their *Spirit* or *Practice*, may be dispatched in fewer Words.

And, first, you charge them with *Pride* and *Uncharitableness*. “ They * talk as proudly as

the *Donatists*, of their being the only true Preachers of the Gospel, and esteem themselves, in contra-distinction to others, as the Regenerate, the Children of GOD, and as having arrived at sinless Perfection."

All of a Piece. We neither talk nor think so. We doubt not but there are many true Preachers of the Gospel, both in *England* and else-where, who have no Connexion with, no Knowledge of us. Neither can we doubt, but that there are many thousand Children of GOD, who never heard our Voice, or saw our Face. And this may suffice for an Answer to all the Assertions of the same Kind, which are scattered up and down your Work. Of sinless Perfection, here brought in by Head and Shoulders, I have nothing to say at present.

17. You charge them, secondly, with Boldness and Blasphemy, " who triumphing in their Train of credulous and crazy Followers, the *spurious* (should it not be rather the *genuin*) Offspring of their *insidious Craft*, ascribe the glorious Event to Divine Grace, and in almost every Page of their *paltry Harangues*, invoke the Blessed Spirit to go along with them, in their Soul-awakening Work, that is, to continue to assist them, in seducing the Simple and unwary."||

What we ascribe to Divine Grace is this, The convincing Sinners of the Errors of their Ways, and the *turning them from Darknefs to Light, from the Power of Satan to God*. Do not you yourself " ascribe this to Grace?" And do not you too " invoke the Blessed Spirit, to go along with you in every Part of your

Work?" If you do not, you lose all your Labour. — Whether we "seduce Men into Sin," or by his Grace save them from it, is another Question.

18. You charge us, thirdly, with "requiring * a blind and implicit Trust from our Disciples," who accordingly "trust as implicitly † in their Preachers, as the Papists in their Pope, Councils or Church." Far from it: Neither do we require it; nor do they that hear us, place any such Trust in any Creature. They *search the Scriptures*, and hereby try every Doctrine, whether it be of God. And what is agreeable to Scripture they embrace; what is contrary to it they reject.

19. You charge us, fourthly, with injuring the Clergy in various Ways. 1st. "They are very industrious to dissolve or break off that Spiritual Intercourse, which the Relation wherein we stand, requires should be preserved betwixt us and our People." But can that spiritual Intercourse be either preserved or broke off, which never existed? What spiritual Intercourse exists between *you*, the *Rector* of *St. Michael*, and the People of your Parish? I suppose you preach to them once a Week, and now and then read Prayers. Perhaps you visit One in Ten of the Sick. And is this all the *spiritual Intercourse*, which you have with those, *over whom the Holy Ghost hath made you an Overseer*? In how poor a Sense then do you *watch over the Souls*, for whom you are to *give an Account*

to GOD ! Sir, I wish to GOD, there were a truly spiritual Intercourse between you and all your People ! I wish you “ knew all your Flock by Name, not excepting the Men-servants and Women-servants ! ” Then you might *cherish each, as a Nurse her own Children,* and *train them up in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord.* Then might you *warn every one and exhort every one,* till you should *present every one perfect in Christ Jesus.*

“ But they say, Our Sermons contradict the Articles, Homilies and Liturgy of our own Church : Yea, that we contradict ourselves, saying one Thing in the Desk and another in the Pulpit.” And is there not cause to say so ? I myself have heard several Sermons preached in Churches, which flatly contradicted both the Articles, Homilies and Liturgy; particularly on the Head of Justification. I have likewise heard more than one or two Persons, who “ said one Thing in the Desk and another in the Pulpit.” In the Desk they prayed GOD to *cleanse the Thoughts of their Hearts by the Inspiration of his Holy Spirit.* In the Pulpit they said “ There was no such Thing as *Inspiration* since the Time of the Apostles.”

“ But this is not all. You poison the People by the most peevish and spiteful Invectives against the Clergy, the most rude and rancorous Revilings, and the most invidious * Calumnies.” No more than I poison them with *Arsenic*. I make no peevish or spiteful Invectives against any Man. Rude and rancorous Revile-

ings (such as your present Tract abounds with) are also far from me. I dare not *return Raling for Raling*, because (whether you know it, or no) I fear God. Invidious Calumnies likewise I never dealt in: All such Weapons I leave to *you*.

20. One Charge remains, which you repeat over and over, and lay a peculiar Stress upon: (As to what you talk about *perverting Scripture*, I pass it by, as mere, unmeaning, Common-place Declamation.) It is the poor old, worn-out Tale of "Getting Money by Preaching." This you only intimate at first. "Some of their Followers had an *inward Call*, to sell all that they had, and lay it * *at their Feet*." Pray, Sir, favour us with the Name of One, and we will excuse you as to all the rest. In the next Page you grow bolder, and roundly affirm "With all their Heavenly-mindedness, they could not help casting a Sheep's-eye at the unrighteous Mammon. Nor did they pay their Court to it with less Cunning and Success than *Montanus*. Under the specious Appearance of Gifts and Offerings, they raised Contributions from every Quarter. Besides the Weekly Pensions squeezed out of the poorer and lower Part of their Community, they were favoured with very large Oblations, from Persons of better Figure and Fortune: And especially from many *believing* Wives, who had learned to practise pious Frauds on their *unbelieving* Husbands."

I am almost ashamed, (having done it twenty times before) to answer this stale Calumny again.

But the bold, frontless Manner wherein you advance it, obliges me so to do. Know then, Sir, that you have no Authority either from Scripture or Reason, to judge of other Men by *yourself*. If *your own* Conscience convicts you of loving Money, of “ casting a sheeps-eye at the unrighteous Mammon,” humble yourself before God, if haply the Thoughts and Desires of your Heart may be forgiven you. But, blessed be God, my Conscience is clear: My Heart does not condemn me in this Matter. I know, and God knoweth, that I have no Desire to *load myself with thick Clay*: That I love Money no more than I love the Mire in the Streets: That I seek it not. And I have it not: Any more than suffices for Food and Rayment, for the plain Conveniences of Life. I pay no Court to it at all, or to those that have it, either with Cunning or without. For myself, for my own Use, I raise no Contributions, neither great nor small. The Weekly Contributions of our Community (which are freely given, not *squeezed* out of any) as well as the Gifts and Offerings at the Lord’s Table, never come into my Hands. I have no Concern with them, not so much as *the beholding them with my eyes*. They are received every Week by the Stewards of the Society, Men of well known Character in the World, and by them constantly distributed within the Week, to those whom they know to be in real Necessity. As to the “ very large Oblations wherewith I am favour’d by Persons of better Figure and Fortune,” I know nothing of them: Be so kind as to refresh my Memory by mentioning a few of their Names. I have the Happiness of know-

knowing some of great Figure and Fortune : Some Right Honourable Persons. But if I were to say, that all of them together had given me Seven Pounds in Seven Years, I should say more than I cou'd make good. And yet I doubt not, but they would freely give me any Thing I wanted : But by the Blessing of God, I want nothing that they can give. I want only more of the Spirit of Love and Power, and an healthful Mind. ——— As to those “ many believing Wives who practise pious Frauds on their *unbelieving* Husbands.” I know them not, no, not One of that Kind : Therefore I doubt the Fact. If you know any such, be pleased to give us their Names and Places of Abode. Otherwise you must bear the Blame of being the *Lover*, if not *the Maker of a Lie*.

Perhaps you will say, “ Why, a Great Man said the same thing, but a few years ago.” What if He did ? Let the Frog swell as long as he can, he will not equal the Ox. *He* might say many Things, all Circumstances considered, which will not come well from *you* ; As *you* have neither his Wit, nor Sense, nor Learning, nor Age, nor Dignity.

Tibi parvula res est :

Metiri se quemq suo modulo ac pede verum est.

If *you* fall upon People that meddle not with you, without either Fear or Wit ; you may possibly find they have a little more to say for themselves than you was aware of. ——— I follow *Peace with all Men* : But if a Man set upon me, with-
out

out either Rhyme or Reason, I think it my Duty
to defend myself, so far as Truth and Justice per-
mit. Yet still I am (if a poor Enthusiast may
not be so bold as to stile himself your Brother.)

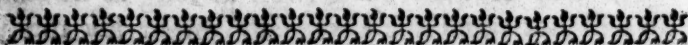
Reverend Sir,

Your Servant for Christ's Sake,

London,

Nov. 17, 1759.

JOHN WESLEY.



F I N I S.

